

News from Ed Markey

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REPRESENTATIVE MARKEY CONDEMNS U.K. BOMBINGS AND URGES FURTHER PREPARATION FOR FUTURE ATTACKS

Representative Markey: "On transit security, the federal government can't be 'just along for the ride,' it needs to be in the driver's seat"

Washington, D.C. – Authorities in the United Kingdom are investigating a possible terrorist attack after four bombs were detonated today in locations in the London underground and on a commuter bus. Only two weeks after suicide bombers attacked commuters during morning rush hour, killing 56 people and injuring hundreds, British authorities are again evacuating the metro system and investigating this second attack. Representative Edward J. Markey (D-MA), a senior Democrat on the Homeland Security Committee made the following statement responding to today's reports.

"Today's attacks are a reminder that we must be vigilant in our focus to strengthen our transit security. Since September 11th, the federal government has spent \$18 billion on aviation security, but only \$250 million on transit security.

"When it comes to addressing transit security, the federal government can't just be 'along for the ride.' It needs to be in the driver's seat.

"Every major transit system in the country needs to have security cameras, bomb detection technology and security guards. We must do all we can to prevent a transit attack from occurring in our country. The millionaires that benefit from the Bush tax cuts may not be regular subway riders, but millions of ordinary Americans are. We must take real steps to protect them."

Last week the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Michael Chertoff asserted that state and local governments should be prepared to shoulder the bulk of the cost of the security protections necessary to upgrade local transit systems. Justifying a policy which passes the buck to local and state governments, Chertoff said: "The truth of the matter is, a fully loaded airplane with jet fuel, a commercial airliner, has the capacity to kill 3,000 people. A bomb in a subway car may kill 30 people. When you start to think about your priorities, you're going to think about making sure you don't have a catastrophic thing first." Virginia Miller, a spokeswoman for the American Public Transportation Association, harshly condemned Chertoff's comments on rail security, "to say that a terrorist attack on a subway is less important than an attack using a commercial airline is another example of how the federal government treats the millions of public transportation riders as second-class citizens when it comes to security." Americans take public transportation 32 million times a day -- 16 times more than they travel on domestic airlines. The second transit bombing in two weeks has left many citizens concerned about what preparations are in place if the next attack hits a transit system in the United States.

Last year the American Public Transit Association (APTA) identified \$6 billion in transit security needs for U.S. public transportation systems. Despite concerns from public transportation authorities and citizen groups, the Republican-led Senate recently defeated Democrats' efforts to increase transit security funding in the aftermath of the London bombings.

More information on Representative Markey's work close existing loopholes in aviation, chemical, transport, nuclear and hazmat security can be found at <http://www.house.gov/markey/>

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